

Christians And Demon Possession

Can A Christian Be Demon Possessed?

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Demons, devils, Satan, and other aspects of the "**supernatural**" have in the last few years become a fascination among many Christians. Several books have been written and sermons preached speaking about the amount of access or contact those in the spiritual realm have with mortal man. Opinions vary greatly as to the amount of influence or control Satan can have over a Christian. Some claim the Devil has relatively little influence over a believer while others insist Satan can actually "possess" a Christian much as he can a lost person. **What does the Bible say about Satan and his demon's influence over believers?** Is Satan of little threat to Christians or is he a formidable adversary that can actually rule or control a believers life?

That Satan has some access to Christians is of little dispute among believers. The Bible plainly says Satan can **tempt** a believer to sin and further influence him for evil. The question we will address in this "**Taboo Text**" is, what are the **limits** of Satan's influence, and **is demon possession of a Christian a possibility**. The large majority of Christians don't believe a born again Christian can in any manner be possessed by a devil or demon, but facts and truth are **not determined by majority opinion**. The final authority for **ALL matters is the Holy Bible (KJB)** and there is where we will look for our answers.

What Do You Mean, "Devils"?

Anyone that has read the Bible at all knows it speaks of people being possessed by "**devil(s)**" or "**unclean spirits**." Christ and His disciples dealt with possessed people regularly and always cast the invading spirits out (Matt. 4:24; Mark 6:7, etc.). As to how these spirits originated or became evil, the Bible is mostly silent. There is some indication they may be the spirits of the "**sons of God**" who took on flesh and came unto the "daughters of men" in Noah's day and later died in the **flood** (Gen. 6:1-4), but there is **no proof** that is the case. Others suggest they are angels that chose to **rebel with Lucifer** (Isa. 14; Eze. 28) before man's creation and subsequently became "devils," but there is no clear proof of this either. Instead of speculating as to their origin, let's look at what can be known; what the Scriptures do reveal.

Mark 5:1-20 is the definitive passage on demon possession and its effects in the Bible. Some of the details about demons the Bible reveals in this passage are:

1. Devils want to be near **dead human bodies** or tombs (vs. 2, 3, 5).
2. They can cause **unusual strength** (vs. 3-4).
3. They can make a person **unreasonable** or immune to sensible persuasion (vs. 4).
4. They cause excessive **crying** (vs. 5).
5. They cause **sadistic** and **masochistic** behavior (vs. 5).
6. They have an affinity for **heights** (vs. 5).
7. They **recognize Christ** as "the Son of God" and appeal to Him (vs. 6-7).
8. They know they deserve **torment** and dread it (vs. 6-7).
9. They have **names** (vs. 9).

10. More than one can possess the same body (vs. 9).
11. They desire to stay in the same **geographical region** or "country" (vs. 10).
12. They would rather **indwell an animal** body than none at all (vs. 12).
13. They can cause animals to **kill themselves** (vs. 13).
14. They desire to be in a body **when it dies** (vs. 13).
15. They have a desire for **water** (vs. 13).

Mark 9:17-29 gives us even more details about devils:

16. They can cause **dumbness and deafness** (vs. 17, 25).
17. They cause rabid **animal like behavior** (vs. 18).
18. They can indwell from **childhood** (vs. 21).
19. They cause **suicidal** behavior (vs. 22).
20. They **resist leaving a body** and violently "rent" it while leaving (vs. 26).
21. There are different kinds of devils. **Some have more power than others** (vs. 29).
22. Some can only be removed by **prayer and fasting** of believer (vs. 29).

Ephesians 6:12 states Satan has a hierarchy of "devils" in his kingdom, **"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places."** Thus some devils have more power and authority than others.

In Daniel 10:13 (as well as Mark 9:29) there is an example of this. **"The prince of the kingdom of Persia"** withstood the angel sent to explain Daniel's vision to him for 21 days. He could only break free when the angel Michael came and helped him overcome the powerful "prince." The "prince" may have been Satan, but more likely he was **a very powerful devil**.

How Does Possession Come About?

The Bible says very little about what gives devils the "right" to possess someone. Obviously, demons cannot possess anyone at any given time or all people would (or could) be possessed from birth. Thus there must be **some sort of threshold** one must pass which gives devils freedom to invade his body. When Adam chose to obey the Serpent (through Eve) instead of God, he, in effect, **gave his "dominion" over the earth** and all that was in it to Satan (Gen. 3). This is how Satan became **"the god of this world."** God originally gave the earth to Adam (Gen. 1:28), but Adam through his eating of the tree of knowledge forfeited it to Satan. This is why the Devil has a "right of access" to every man (even Christ, Matt. 4), because the world and everything in it is under his dominion. This is one of the reasons Christ had to come to earth and die as a man; **to redeem back what Adam lost**. But until Christ returns as found in Revelation chapter 19, His redemption of the earth will not be applied. So even though Christ has already paid the redemption price, it has only been applied to a **Christian's soul** and nothing else, including the earth. Therefore, Satan **still has limited control and dominion** over the earth and every thing in it.

The features that most distinguish man from animals is man was originally created **in the image of God** and has a **free will**. These were both manifested in Adam in the garden. **Adam chose** to follow the Serpent's word rather than God's and we all suffer the consequences of his actions. But the same is before us today. **We can choose whom we will serve**. We can serve the true God according to the Bible or we can serve Satan through the guise of **"self will," and "worldliness."** Satan does not portray himself as a devil to man, he is best manifested by self will and desire; by people following what they think is their own thoughts and way. This is the **same way he beguiled Eve and influenced Adam**. He got Eve to believe her opinion of the tree was more accurate and reliable than God's! Adam knew better, but when he had to choose **he selfishly chose Eve over God**, and as a result brought subjection of himself and all descendants to **Satan and death!** Both Adam's and Eve's acts were deliberate self will. So from this we can conclude, and it concurs with the experiences of

those who have dealt with demon possession, that the more one moves toward Satan's methods and mentality (self will, occult, etc.) the more susceptible he becomes to Satan's domain and influence, even to the point of possession.

Those who have much experience with demon possession claim persons usually became possessed by **dabbling in the occult** and **"experimenting" with the "supernatural."** These are areas which have been Satan's domain since the beginning and when anyone moves, by choice, in that direction (whether ignorantly or not) are opening themselves to demonic attack. 2 Pet 1:3 says, **"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue,"** thus everything a person needs to live and be godly comes from God, but when someone strays away from God and seeks things He is not the source of (but Satan is), then God often allows them to suffer the consequences of their choice.

Below is a partial list of forms of occult activities and movements that are Satan's domain and should be shunned by everyone, especially Christians. Failure to do so may have devastating consequences.

Acupuncture	Metamorphosis
Astrology	Ouija Board
Biological Feedback	Parapsychology
Black Mass	Peditherapy
Blood Pacts	Poltergeists
Charismatic Movements	Pornography
Christian Science	Predictive Dreams
Clairvoyance	Rock Music
Color Diagnosis	Rod and Pendulum
Conjuring Tricks	Satan Worship
Cults	Scientology
Death Magic	Sensitivity Training
Drug Abuse	Sixth and Seventh Books of Moses
Fortunetelling and Soothsaying	Soul Force
Ghosts	Speaking in Tongues
Goblins and Elves	Spirit of the Age
Group Suggestion	Spiritism
Healing Fanaticism	Spiritist Healing, Operations
Homosexuality	Superstition
Hypnotism	Transcendental Meditation
Iris Diagnosis	Translocation
Levitation	Voodoo
Magic, Magic Charms	Yoga
Meditation	

Oppression And Possession Of Believers?

To sum up what we learned above, we know Satan and **devils do exist**, we know they are **unembodied spirits** that work in the spiritual realm, they desire to and are **able to indwell humans** (also animals) and **influence their bodies and minds for evil**, they vary in power and authority, but all are **more powerful than man**, and they can be controlled or **cast out by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ**. But how much power does a devil have over a Christian? Can devils or demons control a believer as they can a lost person?

The Bible mentions basically **two types of satanic or demonic influence** or control over men:

1. Satanic or Demonic Oppression, where Satan or devils contact and influence people **externally; from the outside in**.

2. Demon Indwelling or Possession, where the devils actually **dwelt inside the person**, influencing and manipulating him internally.

Practically all will agree Satan has access to every believer **from the outside** to tempt him and appeal to his self-will, in effort to make him useless for the Lord. Else why would the Bible warn believers to **"resist the Devil"** (James 4:7) and **"neither give place to the Devil"** (Eph. 4:27)? However, few will allow Satan's power to go so far as a devil actually indwelling or possessing a believer. Granted, the thought of a foreign spirit controlling a Christian's body and mind for destruction and evil is one of the **most harrowing thoughts** one could imagine and no sensible believer would want such a thing to occur, but what are the facts? Is it possible? To find the truth we must **ignore all emotional appeals** and simply examine the biblical facts.

Over the years, while reading and discussing demon possession with other Christians, your author has found many are repulsed by even the suggestion that a Christian may be susceptible to demon possession. They talk as if one is extremely ignorant or even demented to even think such a thing, but when asked for their **biblical proof** that it is not possible, their position becomes desperate. They simply **cannot produce a passage or verse that PROVES their argument**, yet they still cling to their belief.

Over the years your author has found that all the arguments against demon possession of Christians are either based purely on **emotion or on a misapplication of Scripture**. You may be thinking, "Are you saying a Christian can be demon possessed? **No, I didn't say that**. What I am saying is there is **no place in the Bible that conclusively says Christians can't be possessed**. But, on the contrary, there are passages that **seem to indicate** (though not conclusively prove) that demon possession of believers **CAN occur**.

When asked for reasons why they think Christians can't be demon possessed one will usually hear, "It's not possible for the Holy Spirit and a demon to dwell in the same body," "It is unthinkable to believe the Holy Spirit would let a devil in a Christian's body, which is God's temple," A born again believer has been redeemed by the blood of Christ and because of that no devil can indwell him," etc., etc. But such arguments are **purely emotional without a single Bible verse to stand on**. These people have convinced themselves of something that is not true because of the **repulsiveness of the question**, but emotion and feelings do not make "sound doctrine."

Arguments Examined

As for the argument the Holy Spirit will not dwell with a devil in the same body, we ask, **why not?** There is no verse we know of that even suggests this is impossible. Furthermore, the **Holy Spirit dwells in the same body the Christian dwells in**, and the old nature of a Christian is **as wicked as the devil if not more so**. Have you not read, **"The heart is deceitful ABOVE ALL THINGS, and desperately wicked: who can know it"** (Jer. 17:9)? The heart of man, including Christians, is extremely wicked. When it comes to a inclination toward evil and ability to sin, **Satan has nothing on man's deceitful heart**. Though the Devil has much more power than man to bring his evil intentions to pass, there is **no proof he has more of a capacity for evil than man**. In fact Jeremiah 17:9 indicates **man may be more deceitful than he!** When a born again Christian yields to his old nature and sins, **the Holy Spirit is no less exposed to evil than if a devil was indwelling the believer!**

Another argument against possession is since the believer has been born again, redeemed by the blood of Christ, and Satan has been defeated at the cross, Satan has no right of access to the believer's body, but this is just more wishful thinking. True, Satan is a defeated foe, **but he has not been taken out of the picture yet** and won't be until Revelation 20:10. Furthermore, even though Christ's blood is sufficient to redeem all things, all things, **including a Christian's body**, have not yet

been redeemed (Rom. 8:23). When a Christian receives Christ **nothing happens to his body**. The believer's soul is redeemed and his spirit reborn but his body remains unchanged. The proof is his body can still die and decay.

The **only nature** a lost man has is the **fallen, Adamic nature he was born with**, and through it Satan has full access to him. Christians also have this old, fallen nature and will retain it until death or the rapture, and since it, in itself, is no different than the lost man's, **Satan still has access to them too** (Eph. 4:27). That Christians also have a new, righteous nature they received when they were born again (which is actually Christ's very own nature and **not susceptible to Satan's attacks**, Eph. 4:24), does not alter the fact their body is yet unredeemed and their **"old man" is still vulnerable to satanic temptation, oppression or even more** (Eph. 4:22-32).

When asked to produce Scriptural support or proof that it is impossible for a Christian to be possessed, one verse that is almost universally referred to is 1 John 4:4, **"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world."** This verse is quoted as if it removes any threat of satanic or demonic influence over a believer, but look at the passage closely. John is simply reassuring believers **they are of God, overcomers in Christ, and have the ultimate victory** over spirits that "confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (1 Jn. 4:3).

When a person is born again he is placed in Christ and Christ comes in him, and the **believers destiny with Christ is certain**. John is here comforting believers by reminding them of this and reassures them by insisting there is **nothing Satan or anyone else can do about it**. He is **not saying believers are immune** any type of satanic influence or cannot suffer in the flesh. As we have seen, other passages clearly state Satan does have access to believers. In fact Peter said to believers, **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may DEVOUR"** (1 Pet 5:8).

The Case For Possession

As we stated earlier, **we know of no passage in the Bible** that says, in so many words, that a Christian can be demon possessed. But as we have just seen, there is no verse that conclusively says one can't. However, there is a passage or two that **strongly suggests the possibility** of possession and they deserve examination.

In 2 Cor 11:3-4 Paul makes a rather revealing statement about Christians and other spirits, **"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."**

By saying, "if ye receive **ANOTHER SPIRIT**, which ye have **NOT** received" Paul is indicating that a Christian who already has the Holy Spirit **can receive another spirit besides!** Some may argue Paul is speaking to lost people in the Corinthian church, but that doesn't hold up. First, Paul is concerned their minds have been corrupted by Satan (through a false teacher) from the **simplicity of receiving and resting in Christ for salvation**. He said in verse 2 he was **"jealous over [them] with a godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband..."** that is, Christ. Paul wouldn't espouse lost people to Christ. Furthermore, he says they could receive **"ANOTHER spirit"** which they did not receive previously (when he was with them). The Spirit they received when he presented them the gospel was the **Holy Spirit!** He also said they could receive another (false) **gospel** which they "have not [previously] accepted." This indicates they accepted the true gospel while Paul was with them because the **"another gospel"** was not preached by him. I know this passage is somewhat confusing, but read it carefully with prayer and the Lord will help us understand.

Paul was aggravated with the Corinthians because after he presented them the gospel and they accepted it, someone else came along **preaching another Jesus, gospel, and offering another spirit** other than what Paul preached. Paul bluntly and somewhat sarcastically tells them if they think they will fare better with the other Jesus, gospel, and spirit, **"ye might well bear with him"** (the false teacher). The point we are trying to make, however, is the **possibility of a Christian being able to accept and receive another Jesus** (demons have been known to call themselves "Jesus" to fool people), **gospel, and spirit is implied in this passage.** Since they already had the Holy Spirit, the only other spirits that indwell people are devils. Though angels are "ministering spirits," there is no indication in the Bible that angels can indwell anyone. There is nothing to indicate Paul was referring to something that was impossible for them. Christians still have their free will after they receive Christ.

In light of the above one could ask, "If a Christian could be possessed, is the possession as extensive as that of a possessed lost person?" Here we must answer **"yes and no."** If it is true a Christian can be possessed he cannot be completely possessed because **there is a part of every believer (the new nature) that is of God and is incorruptible;** Satan can't touch it. If a believer is possessed, he is only possessed in his old, Adamic nature. This is unlike the lost man who only has the old nature; therefore, if he is possessed, he is completely possessed. But, on the other hand, to the Christian who is possessed (if possible), the possession would have the **same effect as it would to a lost person.** The person's body and mind would be subject to a devil.

One may ask, here, and it is a reasonable question, "Why would the Lord allow one of His children to become possessed since He indwells him and has redeemed him?" But let's not stop with just this question. Why would the Lord allow a blood-bought believer to fall in love with the world and **live after the flesh** after he gets saved? Why would He allow them to **lie, cheat, steal, deceive, cause trouble with other believers, ruin his testimony, malign God's name, be vain, proud, arrogant, envious, jealous, and a dozen other sins and vices?** The simple answer is God does not override or nullify man's free will.

If a man has no free will he is little more than a robot. God wants people to **choose** to be saved by Him (no Hyper-Calvinism here) and also choose to live for Him once saved. If a believer insists in following his own will and ignores God's will for him, then the Lord will **chastise him one way or another** (sometimes the results of self-will and living after the flesh bring their own chastisement). And if a believer by **dabbling in the occult** or otherwise moving toward Satan's domain ends up getting oppressed or even possessed by devils, then the **believer has no one to blame but himself.** God admonishes, warns, and instructs His children **in His word**, but any who fail to heed His word usually suffer the consequences for their actions. There are many professing Christians in prisons and hospitals today for that very reason.

The Voice Of Experience

Though your author has no personal experience in dealing with demons (other than sometimes sensing their presence), there are several Christians who have much experience. One is German researcher Kurt Koch, author of **"Occult ABC"** and many other books about demons and the occult. He said the following concerning Christians and demon possession,

"One question is hotly disputed among believing Christians. This is the question whether or not a Christian can be possessed. Many years of experience lead me to the conclusion that those who have no experience of dealing with the possessed say "no." **Those, who have counseled many possessed ones, know that even believers can be controlled or ruled by demons.** These facts do not follow anyone's preconceived ideas. Our ideas must be formed, rather, on the basis of the facts.

"I have had many discussions on this subject, particularly in America. I am therefore more thankful for the men who confirm my own experience. Among these are Dr. Edman, former president of Wheaton College, professor [Merrill] Unger.... When I lectured in various

countries, there were other men in conversations who declared they had **counseled more demon-possessed believers than unbelievers...**"

A Final Word

The reason we published this article was not to unduly scare anyone or try to stir up controversy, but to warn Christians who may have a **false sense of security about demon possession**. From talking to several fellow believers we have found most dismiss the possibility of demon possession of believers for **purely emotional reasons** and are not familiar enough with what the Bible says on the subject to make a knowledgeable comment. They simply don't want it to be true and like a small child **think wishing it so will make it so**. But as we have seen, the Bible makes no such promise about possession and actually suggests it may be possible so the safest position a believer could take is even though the Bible doesn't definitely say either way one must allow for the possibility. **This is the only sensible approach**. Unless one is absolutely certain there is no danger ahead, it is always prudent, in whatever circumstance, to **assume the possibility of danger**. This is prudent behavior whether one driving in his car or dealing with matters the Bible does not address specifically. Christians can have confidence and security about their salvation, their destiny, their Bible, and their Lord because of what the Bible says, but in areas the Bible is silent, confidence can be misplaced.

Even if demon possession of a Christian is not possible, that, in itself, is of little consolation. Until death or the rapture the **ONLY** part of a believer that is secure and beyond harm is his redeemed soul. **Everything else he has can be lost or destroyed** and is subject to satanic control or manipulation. Satan can take or destroy a Christian's **health, body, spouse, children, money, job, testimony, church, Bible, rewards, peace, contentment, safety, security, and even his mind without possessing him!** Again, nothing is secure but his soul, and Satan can even convince a believer he can take it too! The Devil is a powerful and formidable adversary and those Christians who smugly make light of his abilities and dabble in things the Bible warns against are teetering on the very edge of disaster.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."
Prov. 14:12

Appendix

Five Paths Toward Demon Oppression and Possession

1. **Dabble in the occult and paranormal.** By engaging in occult and most paranormal activities such as **astrology, fortune-telling, clairvoyance, etc.**, you are entering Satan's arena and opening yourself to demonic attack.
2. **Seek aid or enlightenment from foreign spiritual influences.** Passively yielding one's mind through **meditation, hypnotism, yoga, etc.**, and seeking knowledge or information from any type of "spiritual entity" is an excellent way to become demon possessed.
3. **Seek power or authority from a supernatural source.** Using **witchcraft, sorcery, magic, charms, voodoo, etc.**, to give yourself power or influence over others in a supernatural manner is asking Satan to use you.
4. **Use or become addicted to drugs or alcohol.** Anything that alters one's senses and places him in a passive state can allow the entrance of devils. Many under the influence of drugs or alcohol have claimed to see demons or the Devil.

5. Remain addicted to one's self. Neglecting prayer, Bible study, fellowship, witnessing, and other faith building activities can cause one to dwell constantly upon himself. He is following after Satan's will and not God's will.

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